m.ts. (provisional) made during the year 1994-95. The despatches to industrial consumers in the country including in Maharashtra would have been more but for the higher priority given for supply of coal to the power sector.

Coal Companies are endeavouring to meet the requirements of coal of all consumers in the country including that of consumers in Maharashtra by increasing production of coal. In addition coal from a number of collieries is being offered under the Liberalised Sales Scheme under which scheme coal is supplied without the requirement of linkages/ sponsorships. Option of import of coal is also now available.

[English]

Modernisation of Jute Industry

5661. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) has sponsored a programme funded by it for the modernisation of jute industry in West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details of the programme and the funding arrangement;

(c) whether there has been been Tripartite discussion on the advisability and feasibility of the programme; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (d). *A National Jute Development Programme was taken up in 1992 by Government of India with assistance from UNDP. The programme is for a period of five years and had an original commitment of US$ 23 million from UNDP and Government of India's contribution of around Rs. 50 crores. The main objective of the programme were Rejuvenating the jute industry, facilitating diversification of jute and uses, strengthening the R&D caracity, providing infrastructural support for product development, technology transfer market promotion and enhancement of exports, development of indigenous machinery sector, promoting employment opportunities, developing an institutional framework for HRD jute sector, enhancing the welfare of the jute farming community and implementing systems of effective management and coordination.*

While drawing up the programme a detailed analysis of the jute sector was made with Experts—National and International and the findings of the study were discussed with industry and trade. The programme also includes beneficiary oriented scheme for various target group including farmers, industrial workers, poor artisans in the handicrafts and the handloom sectors and women.

As far as organised jute industry in the country including West Bengal is concerned, a few programme for spinning fine yarns, development of geo-jute application and production of deodorized bags have also been taken up. A proposal for modernisation of jute industry for technology upgradation, adaptation of existing equipments and manufacture of conversion kits has also been proposed by the Indian Jute Industry Reseach Association and the Indian Jute Mills Association. No decision has yet been taken on this proposal.

Refinancing by National Housing Bank

5662. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Housing Bank has been providing refinancing facility to the rural banks of Assam for construction and repair of houses in the State; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the quantum of amount provided during each of the last three years in the State ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) National Housing Bank has reported that it has not received any proposal for financial assistance from rural banks of Assam for construction and repairs of houses in the State.

(b) Does not arise.

Joint Ventures with U.S.A.

5663. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from Orissa Government to set up joint ventures with U.S.A.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b). No such proposal from the State Government of Orissa to set up Joint Venture with USA has been received.

Improvement in Quality of Tobacco

5664. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of production of tobacco per acre in the country in comparison to the standard production per acre in the developed countries during each of the last three years; and

(b) the steps taken by the Tobacco Board during the last three years for improving the quality, curing, storing facilities and yielding of Flue Cured Verginia Tobacco in tune with the International Standards ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The average yield per acre of FCV tobacco in India and some